

JC10 Rec'd PCT/PTO 07 DEC 2001

U.S. APPLICATION NO (if known, see 37 CFR 1.5) <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">09/980687</div>		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/PT 00/00006		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 0249-0123P	
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21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted: BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5): Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO. \$1,040.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$890.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO. \$740.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$710.00 International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00 ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =	CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY																	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).	\$	890.00																
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width:20%;">CLAIMS</th> <th style="width:20%;">NUMBER FILED</th> <th style="width:20%;">NUMBER EXTRA</th> <th style="width:20%;">RATE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Claims</td> <td>23 - 20 =</td> <td>3</td> <td>X \$18.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent Claims</td> <td>1 - 3 =</td> <td>0</td> <td>X \$84.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) None</td> <td>+ \$280.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	Total Claims	23 - 20 =	3	X \$18.00	Independent Claims	1 - 3 =	0	X \$84.00	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) None			+ \$280.00	\$	130.00
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE															
Total Claims	23 - 20 =	3	X \$18.00															
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MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) None			+ \$280.00															
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =			\$	1,074.00														
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.			\$	0.00														
SUBTOTAL =			\$	1,074.00														
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).			\$	130.00														
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =			\$	1,204.00														
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property +			\$	0.00														
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =			\$	1,204.00														
Amount to be:			\$															
refunded			\$															
charged			\$															

a. ☒ A check in the amount of **\$ 1,204.00** to cover the above fees is enclosed.

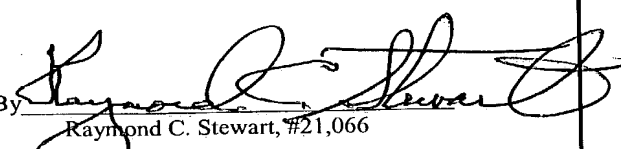
b. ☐ Please charge my Deposit Account. No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees.
 A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any
 overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

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Date: December 7, 2001

By 
 Raymond C. Stewart, #21,066

/rem

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JC10 Rec'd PCT/PTO 0 7 DEC 2001

PATENT
0249-0123P

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: HAFFNER, Eric Conf.:
Appl. No.: New Group:
Filed: December 7, 2001 Examiner:
For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING PAPER
PULP FROM USED PAPER

LETTER

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

December 7, 2001

Sir:

The PTO is requested to use the amended sheets/claims attached hereto (which correspond to Article 19 amendments or to claims attached to the International Preliminary Examination Report (Article 34)) during prosecution of the above-identified national phase PCT application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

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RCS/rem
0249-0123P

Attachments

(Rev. 11/15/01)

09/980687.002.112

09/980687

JC10 Rec'd PCT/PTO 0 7 DEC 2001

PATENT
0249-0123P

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: HAFFNER, Eric
Int'l. Appl. No.: PCT/PT00/00006
Appl. No.: New Group:
Filed: December 7, 2001 Examiner:
For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING
PAPER PULP FROM USED PAPER

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

BOX PATENT APPLICATION

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

December 7, 2001

Sir:

The following Preliminary Amendments and Remarks are respectfully submitted in connection with the above-identified application.

AMENDMENTS

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Before line 1, insert --This application is the national phase under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT International Application No. PCT/PT00/00006 which has an International filing date of June 8, 2000, which designated the United States of America.--

Docket No. 0249-0123P

REMARKS

The specification has been amended to provide a cross-reference to the previously filed International Application.

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 

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RCS/rem
0249-0123P

(Rev. 11/13/01)



DESCRIPTION

"METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING PAPER PULP FROM
USED PAPER"

The present invention concerns the domain of the paper industry and more specifically the preparation of pulp from recycling used papers to produce paper.

For the manufacture of pulp from used paper, it is necessary to put the cellulose fibres in suspension and discard the undesirable foreign components, called contaminants, being this operation called decontamination. The contaminants can have miscellaneous shapes. In particular, metallic particles (clips), sand and gravel, adhesive materials, bits of plastic, ... are found.

Inks are also found, which will be important to remove for some productions, namely for papers called «white» aimed to be printed, to be handwritten or for sanitary use («tissue»).

In addition to the above-mentioned contaminants, mineral matter is also found, blended to the paper in some manufactures (magazines, paper for printing, handwriting...). The presence of mineral matter can be undesirable, in particular for the production of sanitary papers. In such cases their separation from the pulp is necessary.

The preparation of pulp using used paper is the global method, going from disintegration of the used paper until the different stages of decontamination, eventually the elimination of inks (de-inking) and the mineral matter (washing) and may include one or two whitening stages allowing the fibres to recover their initial whiteness. The

obtained pulp will be used to feed the paper production apparatus.

The preparation of pulp for packing cardboards is much less demanding in terms of decontamination.

The classic method of pulp preparation from used paper always begins with the disintegration of the paper and the suspension of fibres, using a pulping apparatus (Stage A). The pulping apparatus is an equipment provided with a rotor (or turbine), which causes a sufficiently strong stirring to the used paper, blended with water, that the connections between the fibres (hydrogen bonds) are broken one after another. A paper pulp from used paper is thus obtained.

According to the quality of the final pulp to be obtained, the following stages may be followed:

- Stage B: A coarse decontamination. The coarser components and in particular the plastic materials, are eliminated by passage through a grate.
- Stage C: The elimination, by hydrocyclone, of the heavy coarse particles like coarse sands, bits of glass, and metallic particles such as clips.
- Stage D: The elimination of the small plastics and other contaminants of intermediate size by the passage through a grate (or grate depuration) in two or three steps, consisting in passing the pulp through small holes (between 1 and 3 mm) and retaining the contaminants of size higher than the holes.
- Stage E: The elimination of small contaminants, essentially of granular aspect

- Stage F: For the so-called «white» paper, the elimination of inks by one or several cells of flotation. Inks are separated with the help of small air bubbles eventually with the help of a soap or a surfactant.
- Stage G: The elimination of the fine sands and coarse black points (small heavy contaminants) by batteries of several stages of hydrocyclones.
- Stage H: In some cases, the elimination of small contaminants of density lower than 1 by a hydrocyclone.
- Stage I: More particularly applicable to tissue paper, the elimination of the mineral matter by washing the pulp. The greater part of the water is evacuated, taking with it the major part of the loads.
- Stage J: Thickening of the pulp, to facilitate its storage before reaching the paper apparatus or preparing the pulp by a hot dispersion or a refining.
- Stage K: In some cases, dispersion of the residual contaminants, by one dispersant or grinder, in order to make these contaminants non visible by the eye. In other cases, modification of the pulp mechanical properties by one refiner.

In many cases, redilution and repeating one or more of the previous described stages is performed. It will then be called a second loop, or even a third loop, if after the second loop one or several stages are again repeated.

- Stage L: Clarification of the filtrates by one microflotation device using dissolved air. The suspended matter is collected in flocks and then flotated at the surface with the help of air microbubbles and polymers (flocculants and coagulants).
- Stage M: Thickening of the solid matters extracted in Stage L.
- Stage N: Treatment of the residual waters by a depuration station.
- Stage O: Whitening of the fibres for certain uses.

The presently used methods of pulp preparation are a more or less complete combination of the above-mentioned stages, each one performed by one different equipment. Between each stage, the pulp is generally pumped, causing a high energy consumption. Certain stages need the use of chemical products. It is frequent, particularly when the production of «white» paper is wanted, to impose restrictive optical criteria, and then the method of recycling used paper is not competitive in comparison with the utilisation of virgin cellulose.

The invention has the object of replacing itself, in its base version, to several equipments corresponding to the above-mentioned Stages H, J, L, M, or even C, D, E, F, G and I, whatever may be the type of paper to be produced, allowing also an important economy of energy and chemical products. The recycling of the used paper will then be more

competitive, including when aimed to more exigent applications. The invention also allows a very lower land investment.

Brief description of the drawings:

The invention is represented by 6 drawings, corresponding to the main uses and showing the main variants disclosed in the description. Their numbering corresponds to the references appearing in the text. All drawings are presented as merely indicative and without any limitative intention.

Figures 1 to 4 represent several embodiments of the invention, corresponding to several uses. Figures 5 and 6 represent the details and specific parts of the invention.

Figure 1 represents a section of an embodiment of the invention more particularly applicable to sanitary papers (called «tissue») in its base configuration having, besides the base functions, one device for the recovery of the fibres having passed through the grate (6) and their recovery by the tube (14) at the centre of the device, one clarification device in two stages, and one device for the reintegration of the recovered elements (13).

Figure 2 represents a section of an embodiment of the invention more particularly applicable to sanitary papers having besides the base functions: one previous treatment of the pulp by elimination of the fine sands and other «heavy» or «light» contaminants in the sedimentation chamber (25) and one classification by slots; one device for the recovery of fibres having passed through the grate (6) and their concentration in the chamber (33); one device for the reintegration of the recovered elements (13).

Figure 3 represents a section of an embodiment of the invention more particularly applicable to printing and handwriting paper and paper for newspapers and magazines, having, besides the base functions: one previous treatment of the pulp by elimination of the fine sands and other «heavy» or «light» contaminants in the sedimentation chamber (25) and one classification by slots; one pre-clarification device in the chamber (33); one device for the reintegration of the recovered elements (13).

Figure 4 represents a section of an embodiment of the invention more particularly applicable to cardboard and packaging papers, having, besides the base functions: one previous treatment of the pulp by elimination of the fine sands and other «heavy» or «light» contaminants in the sedimentation chamber (25) and one classification by slots; one pre-clarification device in the chamber (33); one device for the reintegration of the elements extracted during the clarification of the pulp by deflectors (39).

Figure 5 represents a section of a classifier grate having holes/slots.

Figure 6 corresponds to the speed-slowing device of the fibres extracted at the periphery (8) by tubes having the shape of a snail.

For sanitary papers, called «tissue», the invention consists, in its base version, in regrouping the functions of washing, de-inking, elimination of the particles of density lower than 1, fibre thickening, thickening of the suspended matter from the filtered matter, clarification of water and elimination of contaminants having a density lower than 1. The invention therefore replaces itself to the apparatus corresponding to stages F, H, I, J, L, M of

the classic method of paper pulp preparation. Figures 1 and 2 represent, in particular, two embodiments of the invention applicable to this paper quality.

For printing and handwriting papers and papers for newspapers and magazines, the present invention consists in regrouping, in its base version, the functions of deinking, fibre thickening, clarification of water and elimination of the contaminants of density lower than 1. The invention regroups stages F, H, J, L, M and eventually I of the classic method of paper pulp preparation. Figure 3 represents, in particular, a embodiment of the invention for this application.

For the production of paper and packaging cardboard, utilising more particularly non-whitened fibres, the present invention consists in regrouping, in its base version, the functions of fibre thickening, clarification of water and elimination of contaminants with density lower than 1, and eventually the fractioning of the long/short fibres. The invention replaces stages H, J, L, M of the classic method of paper pulp preparation. Figure 4 is an embodiment of the invention for this application.

In a more complete version for any applications, the invention replaces stages C to E and G of the classic method of paper pulp preparation.

The proposed apparatus comprises a body (1) rotating at a high speed and driving with itself all internal constituents of the device. The body of the device is acted by one engine not represented in the figures.

In the past, used papers had to be disintegrated by means of a pulpier (Stage A), and be submitted to a coarse decontamination (Stage B). In its base version (figure 1)

the pulp should still be submitted to Stages C, D and E of the classical method before the introduction in the apparatus.

The pulp thus previously treated and free from the more important contaminants is introduced along the axis of the apparatus, by one central pipe (2). The blades (3) allow the pulp to be driven in rotation at the same angular speed as the apparatus. All inlet and outlet pipes (2), (12), (13), (14), (21), (22) and (37) are connected to mechanical joints, not represented in the figures, ensuring a sealed connexion with the fixed pipes. The rotation speed of the device is such that the particles are submitted at its periphery to an artificial gravity field, which may be higher than 1000 times the earth gravity.

In the base versions (figure 1), the pulp has already been submitted to stages A to E of the classical method and only contains small contaminants (having in general a diameter less than 0.5 mm). The pulp to be treated is taken (4) along a grate with small holes (6), the majority of water passing through the grate while the fibres are retained due to the low diameter of the holes. The fibres are driven, due to their density higher than 1, and under the effect of the artificial gravity field created by the apparatus rotation, to the apparatus periphery and lead the pulp into the concentration chamber (7). This action finishes at the extraction nozzles (8) with permanent or sequential aperture allowing the pulp to be extracted at an optimal concentration.

In order to not damaging the fibres, the extraction being done at high speed, the speed reduction of the pulp may be ensured by circular tubes (44) placed in a disposition having the shape of a snail (figure 6). The

These particles are recovered by a pipe (10) that take them to the apparatus axis. The section of this pipe is designed to allow a flow speed higher than the sedimentation speed of the fibres. At the periphery of the chamber (5), an aperture (11) that communicates with the concentration chamber (19) of the solid elements separated from the waters to be clarified, allows to avoid the formation of sediments. This aperture may be passed by one counter-flow of water fed by a pipe (12). The flow rate of this water will be adapted so that the speed of the flow that passes through the aperture be higher than the fibre sedimentation speed, while the high-density elements, that resist the flow due to their higher sedimentation speed, are collected in the concentration chamber (19) before being extracted by the nozzles (20). The recovered fibres, collected by the pipes (10) and extracted by the centre of the apparatus by the tube (14), are eventually treated by classical means of de-inking before reintegrating the pulp in the apparatus.

The second solution for the separation of the fibres and their treatment and recovery, consists in extracting them at the periphery of the apparatus. Figure 2 is a representation of this configuration. The aim is to include a sedimentation zone (33) at the periphery of the zone (9) and downstream the grate (6) where the fibrous elements having sedimented by the effect of the artificial gravity field, created by the fast rotation of the apparatus, are collected. These elements can then be evacuated at the periphery of the apparatus by the nozzles (34). Waters to be clarified go directly from the zone (33) to the clarification zone (16).

The fibres extracted by one of the two considered means are previously treated, if necessary, and may be reintegrated in the apparatus. This reintegration is

performed by a pipe (13) that allows the leading of the fibres and other elements to be integrated to the apparatus periphery in the points (13b) of introduction in the zone (4). This localisation at the periphery, next to the pulp concentration zone (7), allows limiting the losses in fibres and other reintegrated elements, being the only aim to thicken the pulp and reintegrated elements. The filtration grate (6) may have, for diameters higher than the point of reintroduction (13b), holes of smaller size in order to limit the passage of the reintegrated elements through the grate.

For other applications (figures 3 and 4), either for printing or handwriting papers or packaging cardboards and papers, the waters separated from the fibres are, for the greater part of these uses, directly connected to the clarification zone by the pipe (9). In effect, the greater part of the solid elements contained in the waters, including loads, and separated in the clarification stage, are reintegrated in the paper pulp after an eventual treatment. This reintegration can be performed according to a method identical to the above-disclosed one.

For other applications, more particularly aimed to the production of certain packaging cardboards and papers needing specific mechanical properties, the grate (6) will also have a fractioning function, i.e. separation between long fibres and short fibres, the long fibres being retained by the grate while the short fibres pass through it. In this configuration, the size of the holes will be designed taking into account the desired effect of fractioning.

For all applications, water and elements having passed through the grate (6) will be collected in the chamber (9)

and taken to the clarification zone (16) constituted by cones close to each other, made of plastic or composite matter with a density close to 1. Water to be treated, surrounded by the separation cones, is directed from the periphery to the axis of the apparatus. The particles having a density different from that of water, under the effect of the artificial gravity field, have a radial speed different from the water one and find the surface of the closest separation cone. Due to the friction between water and cones, the speed of water near the cones is very small, and this facilitates the migration of the particles along the conical surfaces. The particles collected by the cones will have a migration speed higher than the water speed in the immediate vicinity of the cones. Once they meet one cone, the particles of density higher than 1 will then rise progressively along the face of the cone. Water passes to the centre of the device where it is evacuated by the tube (21).

The extremity at the periphery of each cone can be prolonged by evacuation channels (17) that allow the solids collected by the cones to continue their way to the periphery together with the non-clarified water flow at the admission of the clarification. These channels, represented in figure 2, communicate themselves with the pipe for the evacuation of solids (18) before joining the concentration chamber (19) and being expelled from the apparatus by the nozzles (20). These nozzles (20) have an aperture permanent or sequential according to the case and the uses.

A similar method will be utilised to separate and eliminate to the axis of the apparatus, by the action of the artificial gravity field, the contaminants of density lower than 1 that migrate to the centre of the apparatus where they are collected by the pipe (37). In this case,

the solids that exit the clarification zone and are ejected by the nozzles (20) are not recovered by the paper fabrication method, being the majority of the mineral matter incompatible with the fabrication of «tissue» papers.

On the contrary, for the major part of the uses in papers for printing and handwriting, and papers/cardboards for packaging (figures 3 and 4), at least a part of these solids will be reintegrated in the pulp.

For use in paper for printing and handwriting (figure 3), the solids extracted during the clarification will be extracted by the nozzles (20). It will be eventually needed to treat these particles to remove ink and solids by conventional means (selective flotation) before, eventually, the reintegration by means of the above-mentioned pipe (13).

For some uses, the invention allows to reintegrate directly in the pulp all or part of the elements having been separated during the clarification step. Figure 4 illustrates such use. Inclined deflectors (39) allow deriving a part of the elements having sedimented in the sedimentation chamber (33) to the pulp concentration chamber (7). The aperture of these deflectors (39) may be fixed or adjustable in order to allow the mixture in the desired proportions of the fibres and the reintegrated elements, in particular the loads.

A more complete description of the invention, represented in figures 2, 3 and 4, will comprise the function described by Stage G, i.e. the elimination of fine sands as well as several contaminants. The pulp is introduced in a chamber (25). The contaminants of density

lower than 1 are driven to the axis of the apparatus and are evacuated by openings (22b) connected to the tube (22). The other solid elements, including fibres, of density higher than 1, sediment at the periphery of the apparatus where they are collected by openings (26) located at the periphery of the chamber (25) and taken by pipes (27) to the following phase of the method. The pipe (27) is provided with openings allowing the separation and the extraction of the contaminants of density higher than 1 that have a speed of sedimentation higher than that of the fibres. These elements sediment and are separated by the openings (30) and extracted from the apparatus by the nozzles (38). The pipe (27) will have an inclination and section adapted to avoid the sedimentation of the fibres and the passage of these ones in the openings (30). To increase the horizontal speed of the fibres and to limit the risk of sedimentation, the pipe (27) will be fed by the water extracted in the central part of the chamber (25).

Whatever the uses may be, a more complete version of the invention consists in adding one classification by slots and/or holes. The aim is then to perform Stages B to E of the classical method. This classification is performed by a grate preferably with a conical shape (23). The grate (23) will be placed upstream of the grate (6) (figures 2, 3 and 4). The pulp is introduced at the axis of the device at the periphery of the grate (23) according to a principle identical to the filtration grate (6). The fibres pass through the slots (or holes), taking into account their small diameter, while some contaminants are retained.

The contaminants of high dimensions (which do not pass through the grate) and have a density higher than 1 sediment and concentrate at the periphery of the apparatus where they are extracted by several extraction nozzles

(38). The contaminants of density lower than 1 will migrate to the axis of the device and will be extracted by a central pipe (22). However, the presence of a separation chamber (25), upstream, comprising already a stage of elimination of the light contaminants may be useless for many uses. The elimination of the light contaminants will be made at the centre of the device. Counterwashing cycles, allowing limiting the clogging of the grate, will be then sufficient to avoid the sedimentation of the lighter contaminants in the central part of the apparatus.

Water having passed through the slots (23), driving with it the fibres in suspension, is conducted to the axis of the apparatus by one pipe (24) to the zone (4), whose section is designed to impose a speed sufficient to the fluid to avoid a too fast sedimentation of the fibres to the periphery of the device.

In the case of using very contaminated used papers, it is possible to provide a complementary removal of sands and the elimination of some contaminants or inks having passed through the grate (23). In such a configuration, an aperture (not represented) at the part most in periphery of the pipe (24) will allow the evacuation of the heavier elements by sedimentation. This aperture may be passed by one counterflow of clear water whose flow rate would be adjusted so that the speed of this counterflow be higher than the speed of sedimentation of the longer fibres and lower than the corresponding to the contaminants to be separated.

In a more complete version, not represented in the figures, it will be possible to add a grate provided with holes before the grate with slots (23), and working exactly according to the same principle. The holes allow a

The grate with slots has the inconvenient of constituting a capacity limitation of the apparatus. The open surface of the grate may be very small and not allow the passage of the permissible flow for all other functions. To avoid this inconvenient, it is possible to create at the outside of the grate one or several apertures (29) (represented in the figures 2, 3 and 4) allowing to derive an important part of the flow to the clarification zone. The peripheral disposition of these apertures allows limiting the driving of the fibres, since these ones have already passed through the slots (23). The contaminants being at the level of the aperture have a density higher than 1. The objective is to avoid these contaminants to be driven before the water derived by the apertures (29).

any problem. It will be then possible, by means of addition of a water separation device, not represented in the figures, to drive the derived water by the pipe (29) upstream the filtration grate (6) in order to improve the washing effect.

The classifier grates (23) will have an adapted shape, in order to improve their efficiency. The conical shape of the grate with slots or with holes allows to easy the contact with the fibres and their passage through the grate. The angle of the cone will be designed to facilitate the passage of the fibres. However, this conical shape has also as a consequence the concentration of the contaminants of density higher than 1 in the grate. In order to avoid the clogging of the holes, the grate is provided, for the majority of the uses with material relatively contaminated, with angles «ladder wise» (28). Figures 2, 3 and 4 represent such a grate (23) with the ladders (28).

The angle allows deviating the contaminants from the grate so that they gain speed before meeting again the grate. This device will facilitate this way their sedimentation at the periphery of the grate. This angle will facilitate, on the other hand, the passage of the fibres by regularly breaking the set of fibres that are formed at the surface of the grate.

The openings have a radial direction. The inlet of the openings is conical (40), and the cones of the adjacent openings will meet, in order that no plane surface between two cones exists. The objective is to concentrate the fibres at the inlet of the openings, and to the direct them parallel to the openings, being the average length of the fibres much higher than the width of the openings. Once the minimum section is reached (41), the section of the

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openings raises (42) in order to avoid their clogging. Figure 6 shows two openings in profile with these different dispositions.

CLAIMS

1. Method for the preparation of paper pulp from used papers previously disintegrated and put in suspension by a pulper, using the difference between the sedimentation speed of the particles under the effect of an artificial gravity field created by the rotation of the apparatus combined with the filtration actions, characterised by the combined and simultaneous accomplishment, in one single rotary apparatus, of the following stages:

a) Filtration of the pulp through a grate which retains the pulp and allows the major part of the water with small contaminants and mineral loads to pass, being that filtration aided by the force created by the acceleration resulting from the rotation of the apparatus.

b) Concentration and evacuation of the pulp at the periphery of the apparatus under the effect of the acceleration resulting from the rotation of the apparatus.

c) Clarification of the waters which pass through the grate by separation and elimination of the solid elements in suspension with density higher than 1 which sediment at the periphery of the apparatus under the effect of the acceleration resulting from the rotation of the apparatus.

d) Concentration and extraction of solid elements of density higher than 1 extracted from the waters.

2. Apparatus to perform the method described in claim 1 for the preparation of paper pulp from used papers, comprising the following components:

a) A body (1) rotating at high speed, driving together all components inside it, provided with a pipe located at the centre of the apparatus (2), being the pulp driven at the angular speed of the apparatus by means of blades (3) solidary with the body.

b) A feeding zone (4) of a grate (6) being the respective grate (6) provided with small holes which allow to retain the pulp while the major part of the waters and residual contaminants pass through the grate.

c) A zone (7) for the concentration of the fibres retained by the grate (6) located at the periphery of the zone (4),

d) Several apertures (8) located at the periphery of the apparatus to evacuate the thickened fibres in the concentration zone (7),

e) A water clarification chamber (16) to clarify the waters having passed through the grate (6), including apertures located at the periphery of the apparatus (20) for the evacuation of the solid elements having sedimented at the periphery and a central pipe (21) for the evacuation of the clarified waters.

3. Apparatus according to claim 2, according to which the grate (6) may also have a function of fractioning between short fibres and long fibres, with classification as a consequence of the grate hole size.

4. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by the grate (6) having also a function of de-inking, i.e. separation between fibres and inks, with classification as a consequence of the grate hole size.

5. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by the contaminants of density higher than 1 that migrate upstream of the grate (6) to the apparatus centre, being evacuated by a pipe located along the apparatus axis (22).

6. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by the clarification zone (16) being comprised by separation cones to facilitate the separation and the migration of the solid elements present in the waters to be clarified.

7. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 6 and characterized by the separation cones of the clarification chamber (16) leading in their peripheral part to channels (17) for the evacuation of suspended matter crossing the filtrate inlet, these channels communicating with a filtrate evacuation pipe (18) leading to the concentration chamber the extracted suspended matter (19) and extracted by extraction nozzles (20).

8. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by all or part of the suspended matter separated from the filtrates, and having eventually been submitted to a later treatment, or any other solid matter not present in the pulp at the apparatus inlet (2) being reintegrated into this pulp by means of a central pipe (13) freeing the elements in points (13b) located in front of the grate (6) in the peripheral part of the chamber (4).

9. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 8 and characterized by the grate (6) being provided with smaller size holes in the most peripheral part in order to limit the flow of the reintegrated matter through the grate by the tube (13), being such matter characterized by elements with size smaller than the fibres initially retained by the grate.

10. Method according to claim 1 characterized by the fact that the differential of the sedimentation speed created by the artificial gravity field allows the separation, the recovery and the concentration of the major parts of the cellulosic elements present in the filtrates that have passed through the grate (6).

11. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 10, characterized by the heavier elements, including the existing cellulosic elements, sedimenting in the sedimentation chamber (33) under the effect of the acceleration created by the apparatus rotation, and being extracted from the apparatus at its periphery by extraction nozzles (34).

12. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 10, which allows the recovery of the cellulosic elements having passed through the grate (6), characterized by comprising a zone (6b) upstream of the grate (6) where the heavy elements and the cellulosic elements are concentrated at the periphery (5), under the effect of the artificial gravity field created by the apparatus rotation, being the heavy elements and the cellulosic elements, led to the pipe (10) dimensioned in order to the flow speed is higher than the sedimentation speed of the cellulosic elements which are led to the apparatus centre to the pipe (14), while the heavier contaminants sediment to the periphery of the pipe (10).

13. Apparatus according to claims 2, 10 and 12 and characterized by the most peripheral part of the pipes (10) for fibre recovery comprising an aperture (11) aimed to separate the solid matter extracted from the filtrates, this aperture being crossed by a water counterflow fed by a pipe (12) with a flow rate adapted to avoid the fibre passage, the contaminants which cross the apertures (11)

being concentrated in the chamber (19) and evacuated by nozzles (20).

14. Method according to claim 1 characterized by the fact that the differential of the sedimentation speed created by the artificial gravity field combined with a grate with holes or slots allows a complementary action of elimination of contaminants with a size higher than the size of the fibres.

15. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 14, characterized by being provided with a grate (23) having a flat or conical shape and having calibrated slots or holes such that the fibres pass through the slots and/or holes; the solid elements that do not pass through the slots and/or holes are progressively led by the artificial gravity field to the periphery of the apparatus if they have a density higher than 1 and to the axis of the apparatus if they have a density lower than 1, the solid elements led to the periphery of the apparatus being evacuated by several nozzles (38) with a permanent or sequential aperture, the solid elements led to the axis of the apparatus being evacuated by a central pipe (22); water and other elements, including the cellulosic ones, having passed the grate (23) being led by the pipe (24) to the next stage of the method.

16. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by the inlet flow rates of the pulp (2) and of the water outlet flow rates (21) being inverted in a regular fashion so that they ensure a counter-wash of the grates and avoid their clogging.

17. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 6, and characterized by the filtrate clarification being divided in two stages; the first one being a pre-clarification by

sedimentation in a chamber (33) and ensuring a function of separation of the bigger elements; the second stage ensuring a final clarification (16).

18. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 6, and characterized by the clarification zone (16) being divided in two zones working in series, both provided with cones and separated by a central conical wall (35).

19. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 6 and characterized by the separation cones being provided at their closest end in relation to the apparatus axis, and on their upper surface, with channels (36) crossing with clarified waters; having these channels the role of separation of particles and fluids of density lower than 1; allowing these channels the evacuation of these lighter elements to the central pipe (37).

20. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 17 characterized by the fact that the suspended matter separated during the clarification stage may be partially or totally directed to the pulp concentration chamber (7) and therefore reintegrated in the pulp, due to the presence of pipes or inclined deflectors (39) ensuring a communication of the chamber of sedimentation of the suspended matter extracted from the filtrates (33) with the chamber of pulp concentration (7), the aperture of these deflectors having the possibility of being fixed or variable in order to allow a re-mixing in optimal proportions of fibres and particles.

21. Apparatus according to claim 2 and characterized by the thickened pulp being collected after its extraction, in one or several tubes (44) bent in a snail shape whose inlets are located facing the aperture zone of the extraction

nozzles, and in order to progressively slow down the pulp by speed reduction in curved tubes (44), with the aim to limit the change of the physical characteristics of the fibres when submitted to important mechanical stresses.

22. Method according to claim 2 and characterized by certain non-thickened semi-liquid wastes being treated, for example the foams of a de-inking cell, ensuring their thickening and the residual water clarification, being this treatment ensured by the addition of a feeding zone of the wastes to be treated by a central pipe et leading these wastes to the water clarification zone.

23. Method according to claim 2, characterized by the fact that the previously treated pulp may be introduced at the apparatus centre and extracted from the apparatus by the addition of a supplementary grate according to a working principle identical to the filtration grate (6).

24. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 14 and characterized by the fact that the filtration grate (23), with slots or holes, is conical and its inclination is characterized by having on or more angles «ladder wise» (28) in order to avoid the solid elements accumulating along the grate.

25. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 14 and characterized by the fact that the openings (41) (holes or slots) have a radial direction and a conical inlet (40), the conical inlets of two adjacent openings meeting in order that no plane surface between two cones exists, and this in order to facilitate the orientation and the flow of fibres.

26. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 14 characterized by the openings (41) of the grate (23) being constituted by an

inlet cone (40) and an outlet cone (42) in order to facilitate the flow of fibres and avoid the clogging risk.

27. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 14 and characterized by one or several openings (29) being created in the sedimentation zone upstream of the grate (23) having slots/holes, in order to deviate a part of the water, these openings communicating by pipes with the clarification zone or with the feeding zone of the filtration grate (6), these openings being placed in a retracted position and having a conical shape in order to avoid the driving of the contaminants to be extracted by the nozzles (38).

28. Method according to claim 1 characterized by the fact that the differential of the sedimentation speed created by the artificial gravity field allows a preliminary and complementary action of big contaminants elimination.

29. Apparatus according to claims 2 and 28, which allows a first separation action of the big contaminants in a sedimentation chamber (25) located at the most peripheral part of the apparatus, characterized by:

a) an opening (22b) to separate the contaminants with a density lower than 1 which concentrate in the lowest part of the chamber (25) and connected to the extraction pipe (22),

b) an opening (26) to separate the contaminants with a density higher than 1, including fibres, which sediment at the periphery of the chamber (25) and connected to the pipes (27),

c) pipes (27) to lead water and cellulosic elements to the next method stage, having an inclination and section adapted in order that the cellulosic elements

will be taken by the flow and will not sediment by the openings referred at e),

d) a feeding of water collected at the middle of the chamber (25) to feed the pipe (27),

e) openings (30) located close to the junction point so that the heavy contaminants are separated by sedimentation, while the fibres are driven by the flow of the pipe (27),

f) a pipe leading the solid elements captured by opening (30) to an extraction nozzle (38).

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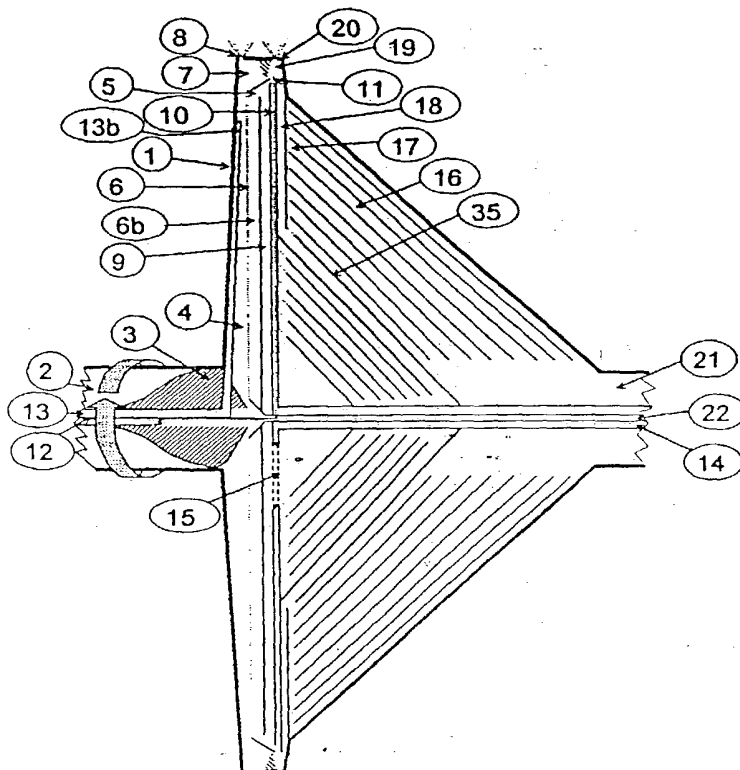
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[Suite sur la page suivante]

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING PAPER PULP FROM USED PAPER

(54) Titre: PROCEDE ET APPAREIL POUR LA PREPARATION DE PATE A PAPIER A PARTIR DE VIEUX PAPIERS



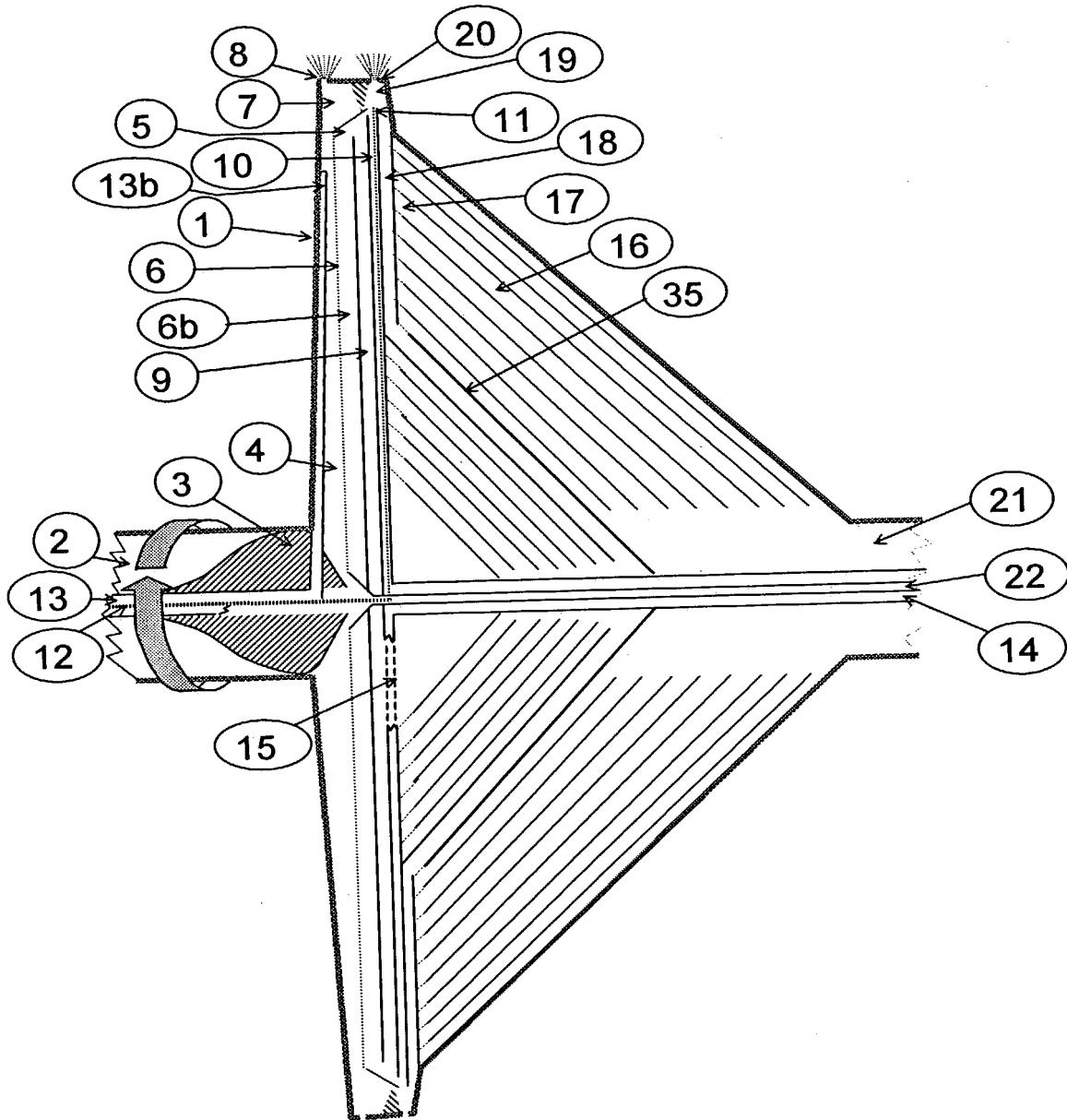
(57) Abstract: The invention concerns a method and an equipment for combining in one single apparatus, the functions for filtering, decontaminating, and thickening paper pulp from used paper, while providing the complementary function of clarifying the filtrates. The apparatus (1) rotates at high speed. The paper pulp is introduced through the centre of the apparatus (2) and driven at its angular speed. The pulp is then brought along a grate (6) with small size holes for separating the fibres from the greater part of the water. The thickened pulp is evacuated through extraction nozzles (8). The water is clarified in the clarification zone (12) and recycled or eliminated depending on uses. More complete embodiments of the apparatus include the functions of fractionating, de-inking and purifying the pulp with slots or holes.

(57) Abrégé: L'invention se rapporte à un procédé et à un équipement qui permettent de réunir en un seul appareil, les fonctions de filtration, de décontamination, et d'épaississement de pâte à papier à partir de vieux papiers, tout en assurant la fonction complémentaire de clarification des filtrats. L'appareil (1) tourne à grande vitesse. La

[Suite sur la page suivante]



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2/6

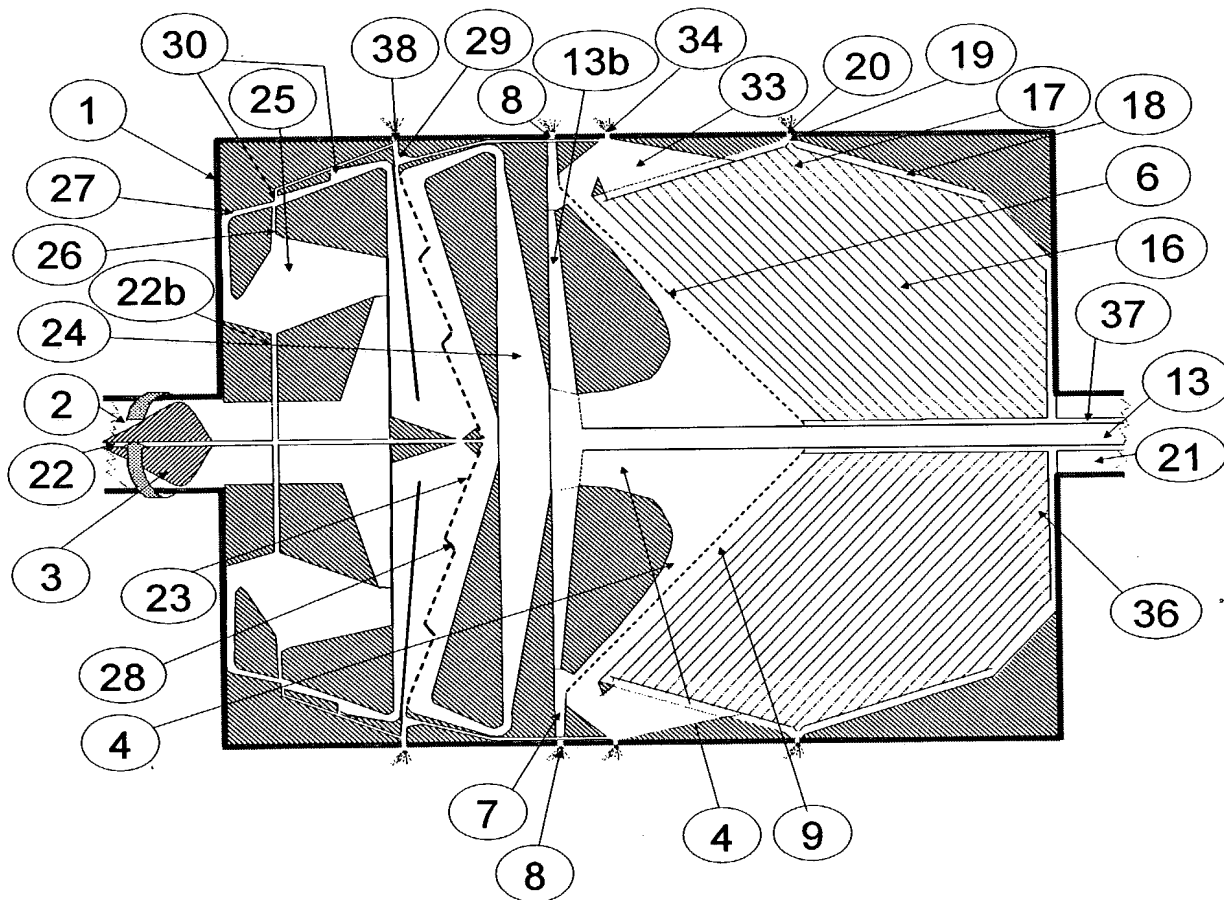


FIGURE 2

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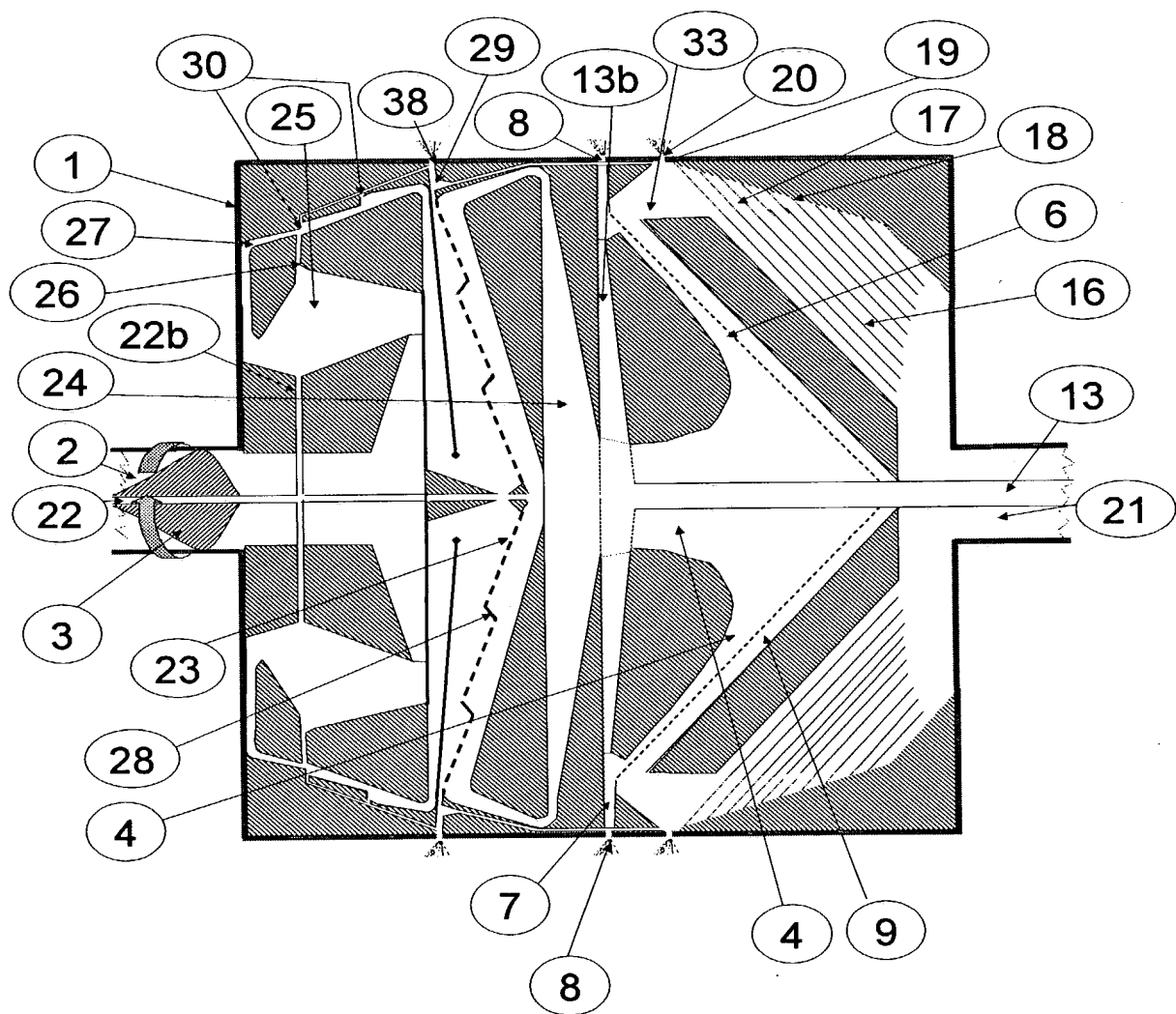


FIGURE 3

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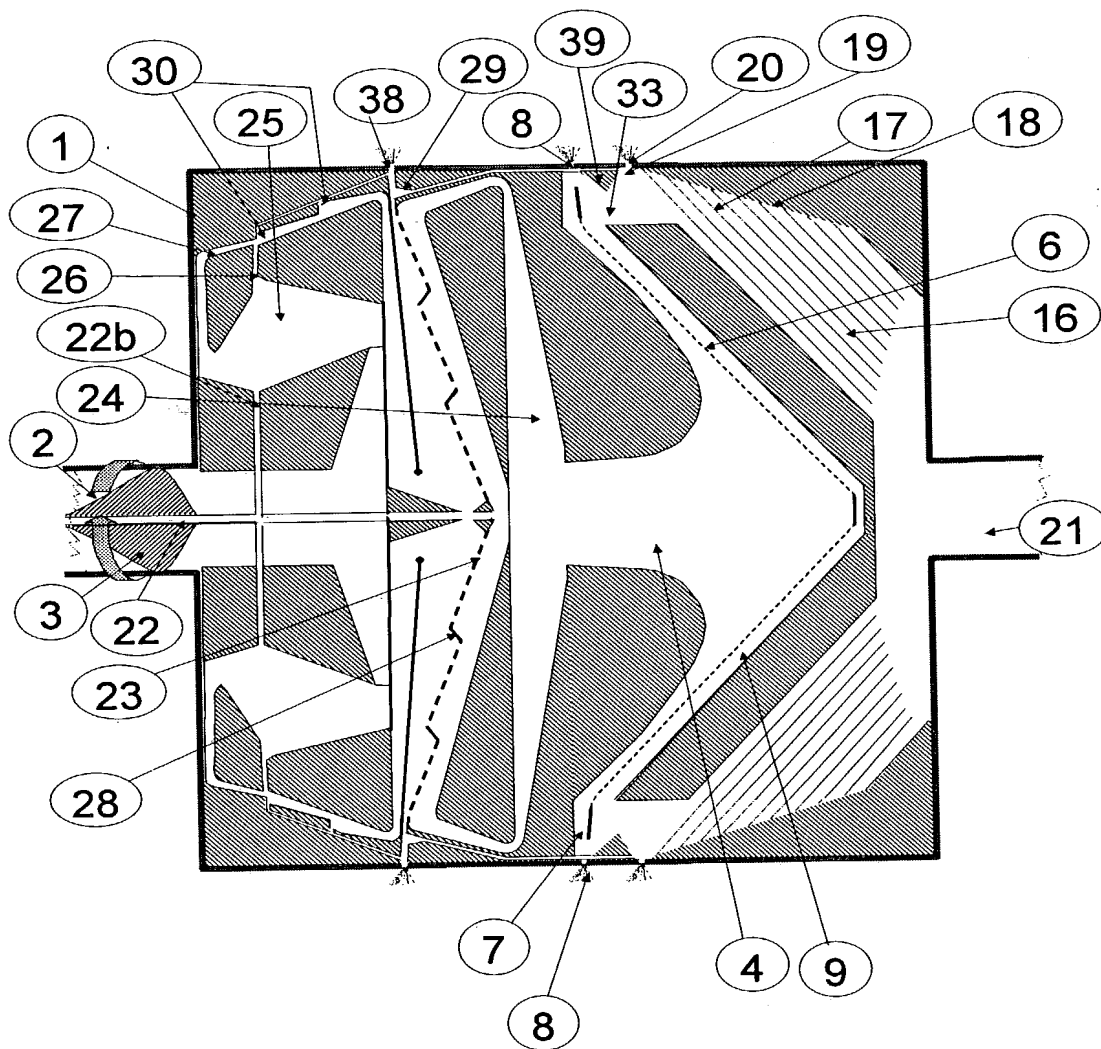


FIGURE 4



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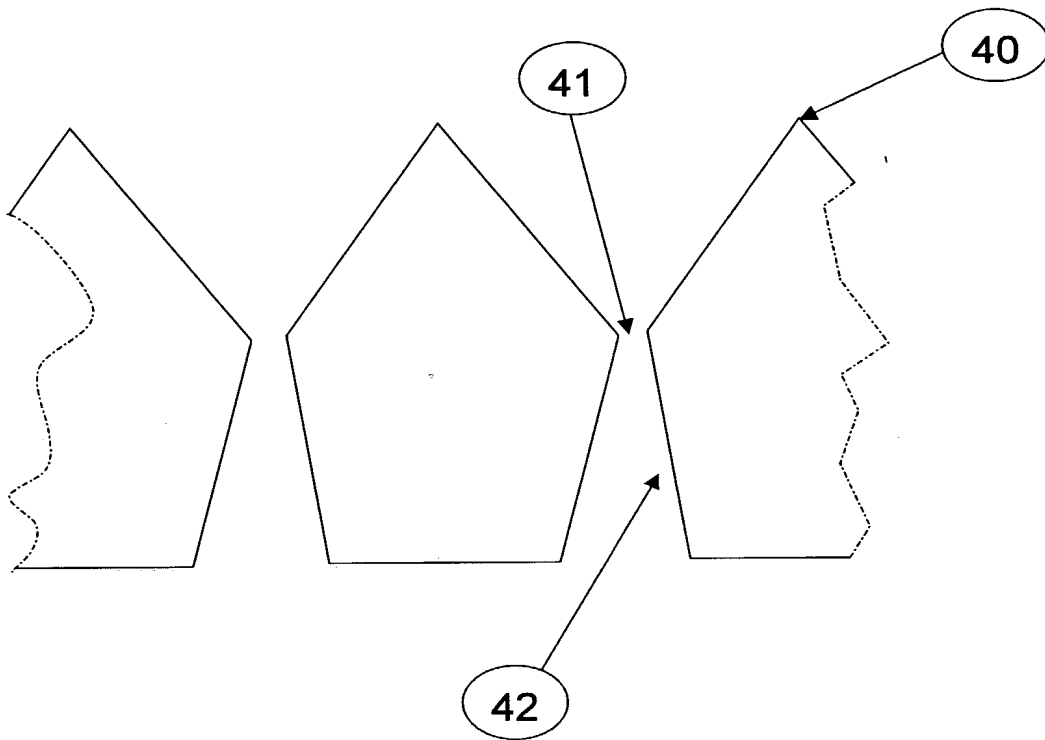


FIGURE 5

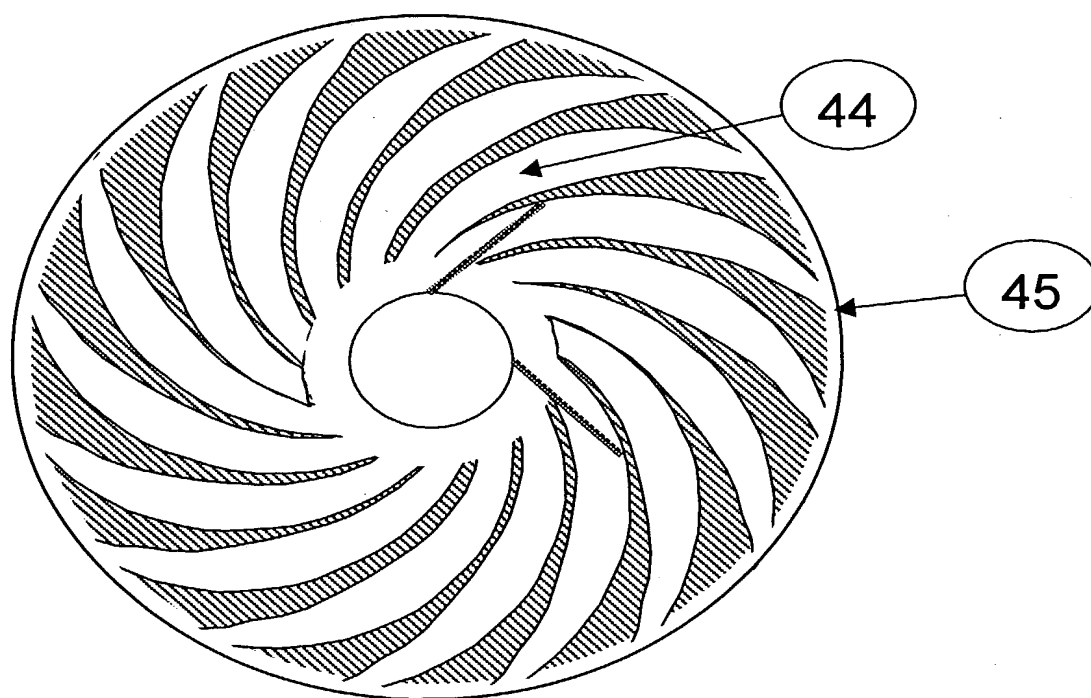


FIGURE 6

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